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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NORTHWESTERN DIVISION, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 2870
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208-2870

Planning and Policy Division

Reply to
Attention of:

FEB 01 2001

Ms. Stephanie Hallock
Director
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
811 SW Sixth Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Ms. Hallock:

This letter is on behalf of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). In the Corps letter of January 19, 2001, we detailed our proposal for a long-term water quality management plan for the Columbia River in conjunction with the recently released NMFS Biological Opinion for the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS). We are pleased to hear that your agency is supportive of this approach, and we look forward to working with you on it.

We understand that while this addresses the long-term, those operations for 2001 as contained in the biological opinion need to be resolved more quickly. We are desirous of continuing the measures related to spill at the Columbia and Snake River mainstem dams as has occurred in the past.

As you know, the Corps operates these projects for a range of beneficial uses, including navigation, power generation, flood control, irrigation and fish passage. It is sometimes difficult to satisfy all the needs at any given time and achieve all these purposes. The Corps, as a matter of policy, has always sought to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act, consistent with its Congressionally mandated mission. We intend to continue this policy, and will make every attempt to meet the requirements of the Act.

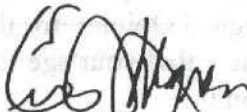
Reasonable and Prudent Alternative Action 54 of the 2000 NMFS Biological Opinion calls for spilling to facilitate passage of juvenile salmonids outmigrating in the Snake and Columbia rivers. The spill operation has been part of the operation of the FCRPS since 1995. The Corps in accordance with the 2000 NMFS Biological Opinion would like to continue these operations which result in exceeding the State of Oregon's water quality standard for total dissolved gas at McNary, John Day, The Dalles and Bonneville projects. We appreciate the candor of your officials in underlining the importance of the standard and the State's response to exceedances.

We would appreciate the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission's (Commission) facilitation of our ability to carry out this important element of the Biological Opinion consistent with the Commission's actions in the past. This is consistent with the Corps' policy stated

above, and recognizes the serious and unique nature of the Columbia River threatened and endangered species with the unprecedented snowpack and project low flows.

We would appreciate greatly any efforts you can make to facilitate the process through your Commission to enable a timely start to the fish passage requirements of the biological opinion as close to April 1, 2001 as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact either Dave Ponganis or Dick Cassidy for any assistance we can render.

Sincerely,



Eric T. Mogren
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Deputy Division Engineer